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## TRAINING OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE INNOVATIVE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT OF A UNIVERSITY: CONCEPTUAL IDEAS AND INNOVATION MECHANISMS

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### Abstract

The study presents a reflection of the problem of innovation training of future social workers in Ukraine in the context of forming the innovative educational environment of higher educational institutions.

Changes in the system of social workers training are characterized, frames of adding and widening their realization by conceptual ideas and mechanisms as to education in the field of social work are outlined. There is presented the multi-vector type of educational evolution in the field of social education that provides co-existence, development and interaction of conceptions, statements and views, different by their ideas as to the theoretical-methodological base of social workers training.

Solving the problem of functioning of the innovative educational environment of social workers training provides a purpose-oriented preparation to elaboration and implementation of social work innovations, based on ideas of pedagogical innovation, competence-oriented and project teaching, social partnership. This process is specially organized, purpose-oriented, dynamic, which socio-pedagogical conditions are realized in the common activity of teaching subjects due to integration of innovative possibilities of the educational environment and personal potential of a specialist, support of students' ideas and initiatives, introduction of the method of situational modeling of social situations, provision of teaching subjects' interaction as a special type of social partnership of state institutions and public organizations.

Such social workers training provides orientation on general scientific principles (system, open, variation, complex ones), concrete-scientific principles of organizing the educational environment (subjective activity, innovation, reflection, integration of the content of educational and other types of activity, principle of social partnership as realization of interaction between social institutions, organization of studio training).

It has been proved, that renovation of social workers training as a process of purpose-oriented support of the innovative content of environment possibilities corresponds to the characteristics (practice-orientation, polyfunctionality, openness, innovativeness) and may be provided by organization-managerial, scientific-methodological, activity-practical mechanisms.

**Keywords:** education in the field of social work, innovative educational environment of a university, conception and mechanisms of renovation of social workers training, innovation-oriented training.

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## 1. Introduction

As a result of the development of innovations in social work, an important question under conditions of modernization and reformation of the social sphere in Ukraine remains to improve social workers training, according to the social demand – to train specialists, able to implement innovative changes in the field of social work.

The present system of social workers training in Ukraine tries to take into account world tendencies and international standards, but remain inflexible for acquiring “new” knowledge, abilities, skills and competences, necessary for realizing renovated functions of a social worker. An important role for forming a system of social workers training in Ukraine belongs to the specificity of educational institutions, in which it was implemented and realized, observing requirements of the State field standard of training specialists of the subject “Social work”. Taking into account of new requirements to the social worker’s personality, introduction of innovative technologies of giving social services to the population cause a necessity to renovate the educational-upbringing process and to introduce changes to organization of the educational environment of social workers training at universities.

As far as evolution of a socio-cultural phenomenon of education in the field of social work is considered through the aspect of leading ideas about social workers training as a total educational space, typical features become the process of transmitting experience by means of traditional teaching and one of stimulation of changes by means of innovative teaching. Such multi-vector character of evolution in the field of social education provides co-existence, development and interaction of conceptions, statements and views, different by their ideas as to the theoretical-methodological base of social workers training.

Giving a possibility to implement idea origins of conceptions about the community of teachers and students is caused by searching for effective ways of solving critical problems of social workers training realization [1]: absence of a teaching method, practice efficiency, introduction to educational programs of social work, estimation of the competence and general educational program of social workers training. Ways of the effective social workers training as means of improving the education quality in the field of social work are considered as creation and introduction of: ideal educational environment, observing ethic values of social work [2], training for forming mutual relations and interpersonal help, study of communication efficiency [1], educational partnership with institutions of the social sphere [3], competence in partnership, based on “general”, “additional” and “special” competences [4], integration of theory and practice of social work as to formation of professional socialization of students and specialists-practicians [5].

The modern stage of education formation and development in the field of social work needs its conceptual understanding, according to the new requirements of training in the context of specific features of universities, especially classic ones, pedagogical, technical and other profile universities that train specialists of the social sphere. Just that is why the scientific discussion in the educational space of higher school of Ukraine takes place as to searching conceptual ideas and renovation mechanisms of *social workers training under conditions of the innovative educational environment*. The formation of the innovative educational environment of a university becomes a generalizing idea, around which the conception of social workers training renovation is built.

## 2. Aim of research

The aim of the research is to define conceptual ideas, principles and mechanisms of social workers training renovation, taking into account achievements of the foreign and native experience as to elaborating a model of innovation-oriented training under conditions of the innovative educational environment of a university.

## 3. Materials and Methods

At the research there were used elements of scientific methods: analysis, synthesis, generalization, systematization.

Social workers training is a relatively “new” component in the higher education system, but the distinctness of defining conceptual bases of its renovation under conditions of the innovative educational environment of a university must completely reflect the adequate modern condition of social work and socio-cultural and socio-economic realities of the social development of the country.

The social workers training organization in Ukraine at the beginning of 90-ies was distinguished by domination of universities, both classic and profile ones. Universities as leading institutions independently determined the content, forms and methods of social workers training, according to its directionality by certain specialties in the social work branch. At that the main forms and methods of social workers training for the professional activity were chiefly traditional ones for both university education and profile educational institutions.

The topicality of problems of the social work development, priority of social policy directions in Ukraine gave a possibility to influence the numerical development of state social standards of giving services to different groups of clients. The use of social standards in the sphere of giving social services had essential advantages as to the effective organization of the activity of social establishments and institutions: social services for family, children and youth, territorial centers of social service (giving social services), rehabilitation centers for children with limited abilities, centers of socio-psychological rehabilitation of under-ages, children’s homes of the family type, adopted families, social shelters and social hostels.

Social work becomes more and more oriented on the sustainable social development. Essentially connecting the expedience of the sustainable development with achieving other aims of social work, the new practice direction appear and social technologies improve [6]. A natural result is the existence of bases for appearing new directions of practical social work (social innovations, social mediation and social entrepreneurship [7], green social work [8], social leadership [9], leadership in social work [10]), training for which needs elaboration of new courses of social work, improvement of its content and implementation of new methods and strategies of training future social workers.

Prospects of implementing innovations to practical social work depend on both realization degree of social workers professional training and association degree of training means, possibilities and resources. Renovation of the content and technologies of social work must be characterized by the innovative directionality of steps, methods and influences of achieving diverse tasks of social workers training.

In this connection it is necessary for social workers training to take into account both essential changes that take place in the field of social work and ones in the system of social workers professional education. For improving future social workers professional training at higher educational institutions, scientists elaborate and model its main characteristics. Special attention is needed for adapting conceptual ideas and achievements of the pedagogical experience in using traditional and innovative forms and methods of teaching and upbringing to organization conditions of social workers training at universities.

The most scientific achievement as to widening theoretical-methodical principles of social workers training is presented by the ideas of: Sensitivity Training of students for social work [11]; Evidence-based professional training to practical social work [12]; A Pedagogical Model for Reflective Practice as to interaction with clients of social work [13]; Ethical values Model and critical reflective practice of interaction with clients by means of online technologies [14].

As it is shown by the experience of social workers training in Ukraine, there is observed the essential addition of existing kinds (structural-functional, organization-structural, integral) and types (qualification, competence) of training models. Models of social workers training in Ukraine, implemented at higher educational institutions, were constructed as a structural-functional system of professional knowledge, abilities, skills and values of social work, which determinants are system, integrity, structure and functionality. The improvement of theoretical-methodological principles of social workers training takes place by using praxeological approach [15], social fundraising and virtue as innovative social technologies [16],

that allow to provide a positive dynamics of forming the students' readiness to professional functions realization in the field of social work.

Transformation of the native professional social workers training on conceptual bases of different scientific approaches gains main characteristics as to its further renovation and improvement:

- observance of requirements of the State branch standard of higher education for the specialty “Social work”, taking into account functional characteristics of the professional activity of social workers;
- requirements of the modern social work exceed existent possibilities of social workers training, and the correspondent lack of professionally oriented teachers and scientists in this direction continues to complicate formation of social workers of the “new generation”;
- renovation of certain components of the educational-upbringing process of social workers training, taking into account the necessity in elaboration and implementation of innovations in the social work practice.

We consider the following as common in the transformation process of these models of social workers training:

- recognition of training aims, according to its result, determined as a readiness to the professional activity by the triad “knowledge, abilities, skills – personal-professional qualities – competence”;
- attempts to achieve the training effectiveness by borrowing or creating models-examples of the professional activity in the sphere of social work or models-examples of a social worker's personality that influence the choice of a model of future social workers professional training.

Distinctive transformation features of models of social workers training is determination of conditions (pedagogical, didactic, socio-pedagogical, organization-technological, teaching-methodical) that must provide the effective functioning of these conceptual models. At that the totality of created conditions must be compatible with educational technologies, used or implemented in the educational-upbringing process of social workers training. But “new” organization methods and forms of the process of social workers training probably must have essential functional advantages of using in the created innovative educational environment.

#### **4. Research results and their discussion**

The topicality and necessity of elaborating the renovation conception of social workers training for the professional activity is underlined by socially-important formation preconditions and success tendencies of the professional training, searches and insufficiency of scientific-theoretical studies, needs for innovative activities in the educational sphere and social work field. For today the necessity of implementing pedagogical and social innovations doesn't cause any doubts, especially innovative processes in the social sphere are the objectively conditioned development of social work theory and modernization of the practice of giving social services. At the same time the actual realization of the professional training on traditional bases only partially corresponds to modern requirements of the future professional activity of social workers.

In this context it is necessary to consider the essence of social workers university training as a special type of social education that integrates different levels of social bachelors and masters training, combining variations of different teaching and upbringing forms and methods for providing the universality of the training as a determining requirement to the innovation-oriented educational-upbringing process, its importance for renovating training of specialists in the field of social work [17].

The analysis of the existent practice of social workers training allowed to construct a conception of social workers training renovation under conditions of the innovative educational environment of a university due to the theoretical substantiation of ideas, concepts, conceptual directions, main principles and mechanisms of its renovation. For achieving the

maximal efficiency and success of social workers training, providing influence mechanisms of the innovative educational environment of a university on all components of the educational-upbringing process [18], the renovation must be realized on united conceptual bases.

At the same time the theoretical and practical importance and significance of studying the modern condition of social workers training for the professional activity, especially for implementing innovations in the social sphere, doesn't object the necessity of elaborating conceptual bases of the social workers training renovation, taking into account the influence of innovative-educational features of the university environment, because it is the insufficiently studied problem in the native socio-pedagogical theory and practice.

The new context of understanding the need in creating "new" possibilities of social workers training gives us certitude as to necessary changes. It is understood, that training as a dynamic developing system is providing the necessary transforming reconstruction for realizing the effective renovating process. The renovation of university social workers training is the acknowledged need (conscious competence) of subjects in developing "new" opportunities for creating the innovative educational environment as a firm background for realizing necessary conditions of teaching and acquired experience, according to the requirements of the future professional activity.

Solving the problem of functioning of the innovative educational environment of social workers training at a university provides a purpose-oriented preparation to elaboration and implementation of social work innovations, based on ideas of pedagogical innovation, competence-oriented and project teaching, social partnership. This process is specially organized, purpose-oriented, dynamic, which socio-pedagogical conditions are realized in common activity of teaching subjects due to integration of innovative possibilities of the educational environment and personal potential of a specialist, support of students' ideas and initiatives, introduction of the method of situational modeling of social situations, provision of teaching subjects' interaction as a special type of social partnership of state institutions and public organizations.

Social workers training in the innovative educational environment of a university is understood as a system of social workers training for the professional activity that reflects tendencies of innovations implementation in the sphere of social work and social education (opening of a personal potential, acquisition of a social and professional experience, manifestation of creative activity and leader qualities; reorganization of social education, renovation of the teaching content and use of innovative forms and methods in the socio-pedagogical process) and provides orientation on general scientific principles (system, open, variation, complex ones), concrete-scientific principles of organizing the educational environment (subjective activity, innovation, reflection, integration of the content of educational and other types of activity, principle of social partnership as realization of interaction between social institutions, organization of studio training).

Social workers training renovation as a process of purpose-oriented socio-pedagogical support of implementing and accumulating the content of environment possibilities must correspond to the following characteristics:

- *Practice-orientation*, because assimilation of knowledge, acquisition of abilities and skills take place, based on the real life and professional experience. Social workers training reorientation on the professional activity assimilation provides the use of practical forms and methods of creating their professional experience;

- *polyfunctionality*, in such a way functions of social workers training widen for realizing additional teaching programs, educational and upbringing forms and methods. The polyfunctional character of the training environment realizes its main functions (educational, upbringing, developing, activity, communicative, methodical reflexive) and provides creation of certain conditions and possibilities of social workers training, in which different types of activity of environment subjects are manifested (managerial, scientific, projective, reflexive);

- *openness*, because based on the ideas of integrity and social partnership, resource possibilities of the environment, the interaction of social institutes and subjects of the environ-



ment as to implementing new upbringing and teaching forms and methods for social workers is provided;

– *innovation* conditions actualization of the innovative potential of environment subjects, which manifestation is realized in the development of the innovating orientation and innovating creativity that provide success of social workers training for the innovative professional activity.

The essence of social workers training under conditions of the innovative educational environment of a university, characterized by practice-orientation, polyfunctionality, openness and innovation, is in mastering of innovative ideas of social work, skills of social-projecting activity and abilities to other types of innovative activity by both students and teachers.

At the same time their implementation for renovating social workers training needs certain realization mechanisms. The renovation of social workers training under conditions of the innovative educational environment of a university may be provided by the *organization-managerial, scientific-methodical, activity-practical* mechanisms.

The organization-managerial mechanism (creation and functioning of the innovative educational environment of a university) must provide the practical embodiment of general scientific and concrete scientific principles. The scientific-methodical mechanism (creation of the system of scientific-methodical and education-methodical support) must provide determination of the main requirements for renovating future social workers training. The activity-practical mechanism (implementation of integrative forms of different types of teaching, upbringing and pedagogical activity) must provide the practice-oriented directionality of future social workers training renovation under conditions of the innovative educational environment.

The innovative prospect of social workers training renovation, presented by the totality of organization-managerial, scientific-methodical and activity-practical directions, added and widened the co-existence of different directions of the training educational space. Researches on developing the scientific-methodical and organization-technological support of social workers training under conditions of university education [19], introduction of interactive technologies to social workers training [20], presented for wide discussion, become essentially spread.

The practical embodiment of conceptual ideas of social workers training in the innovative educational environment of a university provides introduction of the system complex of directions of training renovation under conditions of constructing the educational environment, according to the principles that must favor its innovation.

## 5. Conclusion

1. Changes in the system of social workers training at higher educational institutions outlined reference points of widening and adding the social workers training methodology by conceptual ideas for the effective functioning of the innovative educational environment as a base of renovating modern education in the field of social work in Ukraine.

2. The multi-vector type of educational evolution in the field of social education provides co-existence, development and interaction of conceptions, statements and views, different by their ideas as to the theoretical-methodological base of social workers training.

3. Oriented by the new requirements to training social sphere workers, able to elaborate and implement innovations, there has been substantiated the statement that formation of the innovative educational environment of a university becomes the very generalizing idea, around which the conception of social workers training renovation is built.

4. As a result the content, forms and methods of the educational-upbringing process are renovated, that is characterized by the *innovative directionality* of training process functions by combining traditional and innovative means for its realization. Just this directionality allows to actualize possibilities of the educational environment of the innovation-oriented social workers training.

5. Creation and functioning of the innovative educational environment of a university as an effective combination system of pedagogical conditions and resources must intensify renovation mechanisms of social workers training and cause changes of the educational process result. This process is specially organized, purpose-oriented, dynamic, innovative, which socio-pedagogical conditions are realized in common activity of teaching subjects due to integration of innovative (possibilities) potentials of the educational environment and personal potential of a specialist, support of students' ideas and initiatives, introduction of the method of situational modeling of social situations, provision of teaching subjects' interaction as a special type of social partnership of social sphere institutions, public organizations and educational institutions.

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